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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN ENSIGN, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Great King above all Gods, Your anger is but for a moment and Your favor is for a lifetime. You satisfy those who are thirsty and fill the hungry with good things.

We thank You for this great land where we have freedom to worship You without limitations or censor. We praise You for the freedom we find in Your presence and for Your power to liberate us from debilitating habits and addictions. Today, bless our lawmakers in their work. Use them to eradicate the barriers that divide us. Make their diligent labors enable us to live in justice and peace.

Lord, whatever light may shine or shadow fall, help us all to meet life with steady eyes and to walk in wisdom until we reach our journey's end. We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHN ENSIGN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 15, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN ENSIGN, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ENSIGN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we will have a 30-minute period of morning business which will be equally divided between the aisles. After that time we will begin debate on the motion to proceed to the USA PATRIOT Act. Last night there was an objection from the Democratic side to my unanimous consent request to begin consideration of that bill and, because of that objection from the other side of the aisle and expected filibuster, I was forced to file cloture on the motion to proceed. That motion is debatable, and I will alert my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that they will need to remain on the floor during this motion.

We only have a few days remaining before the Presidents Day recess, and we need to get to the substance of the underlying bill, the PATRIOT Act. Members have a right to filibuster proceeding to that measure, but I believe we will be able to invoke cloture by a wide margin, again, showing wide support for this important piece of legislation. I will announce the exact timing of the cloture vote when we have that locked in, but it could be as early as 1 o'clock in the morning when we could

hold that vote. We will be in discussions with the Democratic leader in terms of the time of that vote and we will be able to announce that later today.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 30 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, my home State of Nevada is a State that is friendly to business. We pride ourselves on the opportunities that businesses have to thrive and grow in our State, while providing an excellent quality of life for employees and their families. As chairman of the Republican High Tech Task Force, I come into contact with many companies, all who hear my pitch for why they should expand into Nevada. But as good as businesses have it in Nevada, or if they move to Nevada, what we do here in Washington, DC will ultimately help make or break their success. And when businesses fail to thrive, so does our economy.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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